

Intermodal Questions

Generated by issues raised at Citizens for Responsible Development Meeting
May 7, 2006

Rail Operations

Q: The facility will operate 24-hours a day every day of the year- noise, lights, pollution, traffic.

A: The facility would operate 24-hours a day, but, given that it is designed to be surrounded by warehouses and distribution centers and would ideally have nearly direct access to I-35, its activities would not adversely impact traffic flows through either Gardner or Edgerton. Logistics Parks actually help reduce pollution and traffic by eliminating unnecessary local truck trips precisely because there are distribution centers and warehouses right next to the Intermodal Hub Center. As for lights and noise, neither has been a problem at either of our two existing Logistics Parks. In fact, when some members of the Gardner City Council were given a tour of Logistics Park – Alliance in Texas, they couldn't hear the cranes operating over the sound of the air conditioner in their car.

To learn more about traffic projections and other related information read the [Transportation Study for the Gardner Intermodal](#).

Q: There is talk about re-filling the cargo cars with metal or paper for recycling before they leave the facility so it is assumed there will be a need for a dump ground for this type of material located in the nearby area.

A: This facility would not be used as a recycling loading center. That type of traffic is not what a Logistics Park is used to attract. A Logistics Park is designed to handle primarily consumer products, or components used to make consumer products.

Q: Only 3% of the containers will be inspected for the contents so there is risk of what is being brought into the city. They also said hazardous materials will be transported into the city.

A: The 3% refers to inspections of international containers which are handled by the Federal Government, not the railroad, and Congress is working on legislation that would require the Federal Government to inspect 100% of international containers before this facility would be finished.

This facility would not handle tank cars carrying hazardous materials such as chlorine or ammonia. It is not built to handle that kind of product.

The type of hazardous materials Intermodal is used to transport typically involves the kinds of products we use in our homes every day including household cleaning products, paint, batteries, computers, television sets, even perfume and cologne which are also considered hazardous materials under Federal transportation regulations because of their alcohol content. All of these containers have been passing through Gardner for years to the existing BNSF Intermodal Hub Center in Kansas City where they are loaded and unloaded. Those shipments will continue to travel through Gardner if BNSF decides not to do this project.

Q: The facility may be a target for terrorist activity as it would be a huge transportation/infrastructure facility.

A: We are just as concerned about security as you are. BNSF has its own security force made up largely of former public police officers who work with the rest of the railroad industry to coordinate rail security with the Department of Homeland Security 24 hours a day. That will not change whether this facility is developed or not. The record of terrorist attacks or attempts at attacks in the U.S. and overseas have all been directed at high profile, heavily populated targets such as office buildings, restaurants, shopping areas, public transportation and targets of that nature. None have been directed at freight handling centers. Security experts indicate that terrorists prefer more populated targets for their greater psychological value in trying to terrorize people.

Q: The facility would be the largest in the country and the others that exist are not located so close to a city.

A: This facility would not be the largest in the country. BNSF has larger facilities in California, Texas and the Chicago area for example. The economy in the Kansas City region is not large enough to generate enough loads to make it the largest facility in the country. The size of the economy being served determines how much traffic a facility needs to be able to handle. The Kansas City region's economy is simply not large enough to support building the largest facility in the country.

As for location, the 17,000-acre Alliance Texas development is right next to several rapidly growing cities and school districts including Fort Worth, Haslet, Roanoke and Westlake, Texas. Logistic Park – Chicago is located right next to the village of Ellwood, Illinois.

Transportation

Q: Main Street will be expanded to six lanes as well as I-35.

A: The traffic modeling does not indicate that Main Street (Highway 56) would need to be modified as a result of the Logistics Park. If existing traffic growth rates, as a result of the population growth (37% over the last 4 years) continues, Main Street may reach capacity at some point in time and require the City to address traffic issues.

Land Use

Q: Headlines from other cities show that after a facility was constructed the railroad refused to put up any noise barriers and eventually got in a lawsuit with the city. Wouldn't this ultimately end up costing us more in taxes to fight the issue rather than generate tax review for the city if the railroad chose not to cooperate after construction?

A: That is not true. The headline this question refers to involved another railroad called CSX and an Intermodal center they had built in an old established neighborhood in the Chicago area. That is a CSX facility. BNSF did not build that facility and does not serve it.

The development BNSF is considering for Gardner is the exact opposite of what that other railroad did. BNSF is considering developing what is called a Logistics Park near Gardner. It is what developers would call a "green field" development, meaning that it involves developing something on open, rural land. More importantly, there are currently only two Logistics Parks in the country, one north of Fort Worth, Texas called Logistics Park – Alliance, and the other southwest of Chicago next to Ellwood, Illinois called Logistics Park – Chicago. Those are the only two existing examples in the country of what BNSF is considering for Gardner.

BNSF pioneered the Logistics Park concept which involves developing well landscaped distribution centers and warehouses around a new Intermodal hub center. In a Logistics Park, distribution centers not homes are located next to the hub center, the exact opposite of what the question above stated.

We would encourage everyone in Gardner to look at the websites of the developers who partnered with BNSF in developing these two sites to see for themselves what they look like. The web addresses for each follow:

<http://www.alliancetexas.com/Alliance/Features+&+Amenities/Westport+at+Alliance>

<http://transfer.cntprop.com/availablespacev2/ParkDetail.asp?ParkKey=20>